

FROM GROWTH MINDSET TO PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: AN INVESTIGATION WHILE SAMPLING PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between the prospective teachers' growth mindset and their wellbeing. This was a quantitative study that has been conducted under the Positivist paradigm. The prospective teachers studying BS Education in a public and a private university have been sampled randomly. There were 140 male and female prospective teachers selected as a sample for the study. The data have regarding Prospective teachers' growth mindset have been collected with the help of Growth Mindset Scale (GMS) and Psychological Wellbeing Scale by Ryff et al., (2018) was used for the data collection regarding wellbeing. The collected data were analyzed with the help of Descriptive statistics (Mean scores, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis) and Inferential statistics (Pearsons' r). Based on the results, it is concluded that a significantly positive and moderate correlation has been witnessed between Prospective Teachers' Growth Mindset and Psychological.

Keywords: *Growth Mindset, Psychological Wellbeing, Prospective Teachers*

Introduction

It is well known that teaching is one of the most challenging and impactful professions in today's society, but the psychopathology of those still in training has received little study in education research (Imran, Akhtar, & Khan, 2026; Haider, et al., 2025). The state of teachers' well-being has become more fragile around the world: the 2024 RAND State of the American Teacher Survey shows that about 60% of K-12 teachers say they experience burnout, and they are twice as likely as other working adults to have a lot of stress related to their jobs (RAND, 2024). The same trends are seen around the world: in a 2023 survey conducted in several countries, 64% of the higher-education instructors indicated they were suffering from burnout (HMN, 2023). In this context, it is imperative for both research and policy that the psychological factors that influence teacher flourishing are understood, as they directly influence the quality of instruction, classroom relationships, and ultimately students' learning outcomes (He et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2024).

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a much more than the lack of distress or clinical disorder. Inspired by the eudaimonic tradition of philosophy, Ryff (1989) outlined a multi-dimensional approach to PWB including six interlocking domains: self-acceptance,

personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy and positive relations with others. This framework has been further theoretically developed and empirically tested in a variety of populations, such as teachers at all points in their careers (Ryff, 1989; and social and emotional learning literature, 2021). In the context of Ryff's theory of eudaimonic functioning, PWB is a multidimensional construct that represents positive psychological functioning across various domains, and has proven to be an important outcome for pre-service teachers' sustainable professional growth and retention in the profession (Lonbani et al., 2025; Lucas-Mangas et al., 2022). More importantly, teachers with high levels of PWB can better regulate their emotions, adjust to the stress of their work, and create positive interpersonal relationships in their classrooms (Hascher & Waber, 2021); and teachers' psychological health can significantly influence teaching strategies, their quality, efficacy, and nature (García-Martínez et al., 2021). This compilation of evidence puts PWB not only as a personal tool, but as a prerequisite structural factor in effective teaching (Imran, Akhtar, & Khan, 2026; Zaidi, et al., 2024). The implicit theories of intelligence framework of Dweck (2006) has inspired a significant amount of scholarly work as a promising psychological construct for predicting positive outcomes in professional life, a construct that has been labeled a growth mindset. This view explains that people's attitudes toward their own skills fall into two broad categories: the fixed mindset, which assumes that intelligence and talent are fixed, and the growth mindset, which believes intelligence and talent are malleable through hard work, perseverance and learning (Dweck, 2006; Vangölü, 2023). People with a growth mindset are likely to see challenges as opportunities to learn, view failure as an opportunity to learn, and stay motivated during the difficult process of learning (Burnette et al., 2023; OECD, 2025). The concept is based on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and has quickly gained the attention of the education and psychology research communities, where various psychological theories such as positive psychology, self-determination theory, and learned helplessness have been mobilized to enhance its theoretical connotations (Hsieh et al., 2025).

There is considerable growing evidence of the association between a growth mindset and psychological well-being, and this association seems to be especially relevant in education. The overall effect of growth mindset interventions on mental health outcomes was found to be statistically significant ($d = 0.32$, 95% CI [.10, .54]) by Burnette et al. (2023), indicating that there is a meaningful average effect of growth mindset interventions on mental health outcomes, a result that goes beyond academic performance alone. A growth mindset has been shown to have specific benefits for teachers: it decreases stress, burnout, and anxiety; increases self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and emotional regulation (Nalipay et al., 2022; Shoshani, 2021). Teachers with growth mindsets are more likely to see challenges as opportunities for growth, accept feedback from their students and supervisors, and persevere more effectively when facing professional setbacks, a set of attitudes which have been identified as contributing to occupational well-being: being resilient, intrinsically motivated and having a sense of self-efficacy (He et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2024). Furthermore, Bostwick et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analysis of teachers' growth mindset for Educational Psychology Review which revealed a positive impact of teachers' growth mindset on teachers' own motivational outcomes, instructional practices, and indirectly on student achievement, highlighting the cascading positive effect of

teachers' growth mindset on their profession. These results were echoed at scale in the 2024 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) that found that teachers with a malleable view of intelligence also report significantly more self-efficacy regarding teaching and engagement with students (OECD, 2024).

However, research about growth mindset, specifically in teacher and teacher education has increased in recent years. He et al. (2023) respectively adopted the structural equation modelling (SEM) based on linear relationships to show that the teacher growth mindset positively influenced the teacher occupational well-being, and the teacher grit also positively influenced the teacher occupational well-being, while, in addition, the teacher grit positively mediated the relationship between the teacher growth mindset and the teacher occupational well-being (Oad, et al., 2024; Imran & Akhtar, 2023). A mixed method study conducted by Jiang et al. (2024) also revealed very strong direct relationships between psychological well-being, growth mindset and mindfulness for 268 EFL teachers with teaching enthusiasm as one of the important mediating variables. In the positive psychology paradigm, growth mindset in teachers has also been found to help buffer the negative effect of teacher burnout (Zarrinabadi et al., 2023) and enhance their professional identity (Zarrinabadi et al., 2023), promote work engagement, and drive teachers' enjoyment in teaching (Liu et al., 2023). Taken together, these studies suggest that the growth mindset is not independent of a specific set of personal and contextual factors such as grit, mindfulness, resilience and self-efficacy; that these factors work in conjunction with and is shaped by the growth mindset; and that these factors are dynamic, as they interact with one another and with the growth mindset in a complex manner.

While there is a significant body of research examining in-service teachers' mindset and well-being, this is the case for prospective teachers – students enrolled in initial teacher education programmes who have not yet entered the teaching profession – who have been studied to a lesser degree, both in theory and in practice. This omission is significant. The pre-service phase is a pivotal developmental moment in which emerging professional identities are shaped, beliefs about self-efficacy and the practice of teaching solidify and psychological resources that support or hinder a teaching career are either developed or not are established (Allen et al., 2021). By using this instrument with pre-service teachers over four years of teacher preparation, Allen et al. (2021) found that over the span of teacher preparation, key sub-domains of PWB changed significantly with autonomy increasing, but environmental mastery, purpose in life, and positive relations with others all decreasing, highlighting the psychological vulnerability of this transition. Emotional intelligence and occupational anxiety (Lonbani et al., 2025) are some of the factors that predict a PWB in this population but the growth mindset is not systematically studied in this population as a potentially salutogenic resource. A growth-oriented belief system may be important in safeguarding and nurturing prospective teachers' psychological health because teacher preparation is simultaneously a cognitive process, a process of field-based practicum experiences, and a process of becoming a teacher.

Even with the cross-disciplinary nature of the research, a consensus is still missing; there is a dearth of studies that have directly investigated the growth mindset-psychological well-being relationship with samples exclusively of prospective teachers, and even fewer studies have explored this relationship in non-Western educational environments with cultures around effort, intelligence, and academic performance that could influence or complicate

the predictions made from Western theory. The psychological strength associated with having a growth mindset could be particularly significant for teacher training in developing and emerging economies, where a range of structural issues exists, such as limited institutional support, high stakes certification exams, large class sizes, and resource pressures. Moreover, previous studies have rarely been able to represent the specific dimensional profile of PWB (expressed in terms of the 6 sub-domains of the Ryff model) in the specific orientation of the mindset, leaving the micro-mechanisms by which a growth mindset can foster or deter specific aspects of well-being to be poorly theorized. The aim of this research is to fill this gap by examining the association between growth mindset and psychological wellbeing of prospective teachers as a way of enhancing the understanding of the psychological underpinnings of teacher professionalization in a contextually more sensitive manner. This current research aimed at investigation the correlation between the prospective teachers' growth mindset and their wellbeing.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching is a highly psychological job that puts extraordinary demands on teachers, but the mental and emotional resources that enable teachers to meet these demands have been under-researched and under-resourced in the field of education research and policy. Psychological well-being (PWB) has been identified by many researchers as a prerequisite for personal flourishing of teachers, as well as for the quality, consistency and effectiveness of education provided (Hascher & Waber, 2021; Lu et al., 2024), and it has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relationships with others (Ryff, 1989). The results of the large-scale international surveys indicates the need for action: teachers indicate that experiencing frequent job-related stress or burnout is twice as high as similar working adults (RAND, 2024), which has substantial implications for teacher retention, instructional quality and student outcomes in education systems globally. The psychological health and wellbeing of prospective teachers, who are students undertaking initial teacher education programmes, and are at the doorstep of professional entry, is a specific concern in this general crisis of teacher wellbeing. The pre-service period is a developmental time that is formative in nature, where professional identity, and teachers' beliefs about their capabilities, are shaped, reinforced or challenged, and the psychological underpinnings that will support or jeopardise a teaching career are established (Allen et al., 2021). Overall, pre-service teachers' psychological well-being has been shown to meaningfully change across the years of teacher preparation, with specific sub-domains, like positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and purpose in life, demonstrating significant decreases over 4 years of teacher preparation (Allen et al., 2021). The impact on the downstream consequences on the life of a teacher and the effectiveness of instruction and the health of the students they serve are severe if they enter the profession with reduced PWB. Hence, the scientific and practical need to identify psychological factors which help protect and promote PWB in pre-service years is urgently needed.

The growth mindset, or the belief that intelligence, talent, and abilities can be developed through effort, persistence, and ongoing learning (Dweck, 2006), is one of the psychological constructs theoretically relevant to teacher well-being that has received more scholarly attention. Educators with a growth mindset are more likely to experience higher

levels of job satisfaction, job engagement and occupational well-being, which in turn, promotes resilience, motivation and self-efficacy (He et al., 2023). In addition, Burnette et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis, and concluded that growth mindset was found to have meaningful effects on mental health outcomes ($d = 0.32$); studies in the context of English language teaching indicated that growth mindset was associated with reduction of stress, burnout, anxiety, and increase in self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and emotional regulation (Nalipay et al., 2022; Shoshani, 2021). As a whole, this body of evidence suggests growth mindset is a psychosocial protective influence that shows significant promise for relevance to teacher formation and flourishing.

Gap related to the Phenomenon Understudy

While the theoretical rationales and empirical evidence for the connection between growth mindset and psychological well-being is becoming more extensive, there are several gaps in the literature. Previous research on growth mindset has largely focused on the relationship between growth mindset and outcome measures, such as learning performance, academic achievement, and motivation, and has not looked at how the growth mindset predicts psychological well-being as a belief-based source of intrinsic motivation and adaptive functioning (Macnamara & Burgoyne, 2023; Sun et al., 2021). Perhaps more importantly, a wealth of existing studies have focused on in-service teachers and/or student populations, and prospective teachers – a group of students with specific developmental needs and the pre-service period itself being a formative stage – have been underrepresented in the empirical literature. Previous research has explored pre-service teachers' implicit beliefs regarding the malleability of intelligence, and these beliefs were shown to be influenced by teachers' growth mindset orientation (Meierdirk & Fleischer, 2022; Snyder et al., 2021); however, few studies were found that specifically examined the relationship between this orientation and a validated multi-dimensional psychological well-being measure.

Moreover, most studies have been conducted in the Western and East Asian educational contexts, while there are few studies on teacher education programs in South Asian educational contexts where distinctive structural, cultural and institutional factors exist, which are not well documented in the scholarly literature. The intersections of these gaps create a major knowledge deficit, exactly when knowledge is needed, during the initial process of professional development, and in geographical and institutional settings with unique characteristics that require locally oriented empirical research. Furthermore, a recent meta-analysis on teachers' growth mindset (Bostwick et al., 2024) has recognized that there is a lack of systematic discussions on the relationship between teachers' mindset and their psychological well-being rather than its instructional or student outcomes.

This study was thus conducted to fill this gap by examining the relationship between growth mindset and psychological well-being of prospective teachers attending the Bachelor of Science (BS) education program at public and private universities in an empirical way.

Methodology

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between the prospective teachers' growth mindset and their wellbeing. This was a quantitative study that has been conducted under the Positivist paradigm. The prospective teachers studying BS Education in a public and a private university have been sampled randomly. There were 140 male and female

prospective teachers selected as a sample for the study. The data have regarding Prospective teachers' growth mindset have been collected with the help of Growth Mindset Scale (GMS) and Psychological Wellbeing Scale by Ryff et al., (2018) was used for the data collection regarding wellbeing.

Data Analysis & Results

The collected data were analyzed with the help of Descriptive statistics (Mean scores, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis) and Inferential statistics (Pearsons' r). The detail is as under:

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Growth Mindset	78.14	11.95	0.24	-0.27
Wellbeing	149.20	18.34	0.13	-0.11

Table 1 shows the Descriptive statistics of the data. The Mean Score of Growth Mindset was 78.14, SD = 11.95, Skewness = 0.24 and Kurtosis = -0.27 whereas the Mean Score of Wellbeing was 149.20, SD = 18.34, Skewness = 0.13 and Kurtosis = -0.11. These results shows the Normality of the data as the values of the both Skewness and Kurtosis were within ± 2 which is the acceptable range.

Table 2

Correlation between Growth Mindset & Wellbeing

Variables	Growth Mindset	Wellbeing
Growth Mindset	1	.53**
Wellbeing		1

Table 2 shows the results of Pearson's r which was run to measure the correlation between Growth Mindset and Wellbeing. A significantly positive and moderate correlation has been witnessed between Growth Mindset and Psychological as $r = .53$ along with the $p < 0.05$.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between the prospective teachers' growth mindset and their wellbeing. This was a quantitative study that has been conducted under the Positivist paradigm. The prospective teachers studying BS Education in a public and a private university have been sampled randomly. There were 140 male and female prospective teachers selected as a sample for the study. The data have regarding Prospective teachers' growth mindset have been collected with the help of Growth Mindset Scale (GMS) and Psychological Wellbeing Scale by Ryff et al., (2018) was used for the data collection regarding wellbeing. Based on the results, it is concluded that a significantly positive and moderate correlation has been witnessed between Prospective Teachers' Growth Mindset and Psychological.

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